

DAY 1



TRANS PENNINE TRAIL
Hornsea to Hull
14 miles



Monday 18th April 2022

Today was Easter Monday, a bank holiday, a day which most thumbs would spend eating tiny Easter eggs, watching a bit of TV, having a lamb roast, maybe going to the beach for a day out, and generally enjoying a bit of time off from the daily grind. But not this thumb! For me, today marked the beginning of my epic odyssey from England's east coast to its west, along 215 miles of the Trans Pennine Trail.

Although the conventional direction to walk the route is west to east, for various reasons it worked



'Southport 215 miles' - how hard can it be?

And thus the journey begins!





Looks like I'm in for an exciting trip! : /

out more convenient for me to do it the other way round, and so I began my journey in the East Yorkshire seaside town of Hornsea. The rest of Michael's body was kind enough to transport me there this morning, and it didn't take long to locate the imposing sculpture on the sea front that marks the start of the trail. Or at least, the start for me – conventionally it marks the end point and serves as a grand finale to the route, but I've got it over with before even beginning so I'm a little worried that when I eventually get to Southport there'll be no corresponding feature and my journey will fizzle out in an underwhelming conclusion. The price you pay for being different, I suppose!

The sculpture itself, by the way, is a rather fine thing to behold. It consists of a representation of the Trans Pennine Trail logo – a sphere with two wavy things above and below – set atop a very tall copper-coloured cone. It's a simple yet pleasing design, and not a little reminiscent of The Eye of Sauron from The Lord of the Rings. I would be concerned about what might happen if I try to don a ring on this trip, but really that's not much of a problem for a thumb. The rest of Michael's digits tend to deal with such things.

The other important task I fulfilled in Hornsea was to go to the leisure centre and get them to stamp my card as proof that I've started the route.



I could be waiting a long time for the next train from this platform.

The idea is that you collect stamps all along the trail, then when you've finished you can get a certificate and badge, which are both things I crave above all else. You can also order a T-shirt, but I don't plan to do that. I mean, c'mon. What use would a thumb have for a T-shirt?

It was at 11:45 that I bid goodbye to the rest of Michael's body and started on the first leg of my journey: the 14-mile stretch from Hornsea to Hull. All in all it was a fairly homogeneous route, mainly consisting of a path leading between fields and through corridors of trees, but with nothing really spectacular in the way of scenery. I'm not saying it



Fair enough asking me to be careful, but there's no need to be rude about it.



Cavorting past the fields on the way to Hull.

was unpleasant, not by any measure; I'm just saying I'd like to see future footpaths put in a little more effort.

I believe most of today's route was adapted from a disused railway, judging by the various platforms and railway-station-esque houses I encountered on the way (not to mention all the ghost trains that kept threatening to run me down). Now it's part of the National Cycle Network, as was abundantly evident today. So many cyclists... And not just cyclists, but other vehicles as well. At one point two motorbikes zoomed past and scared the life out of me. I don't know if they're technically allowed on the route, but I somehow feel they shouldn't be. I



It's amazing who you meet in city subways.

know a motorbike is a type of cycle, but it doesn't seem to really be in the spirit of a countryside cycle path, does it? And the other vehicles I encountered were two electric scooters ("Electric scooters, Jeremy! They're a menace!").

The weather today, unusually for a bank holiday, was really quite glorious. When I planned my journey I did try and account for this. April seemed a good choice of month: A decent chance of sunshine without being scorching hot, coupled with light evenings and all the beautiful things that happen in spring. So yes I planned it that way, but I didn't actually expect it to work! Today, though, was a lovely surprise in how perfect the conditions were.

Long may it continue.

Navigation, in general, was fine too. But that's largely because for this section there's literally nowhere to go wrong – you just follow the path. It was only when I got to Hull, where several other cycle routes and footpaths began to converge, that things got a little more difficult. At one point I did completely lose faith in my present direction and spent probably an hour trying out all the other paths in the vicinity, only to realise at last that my original route was in fact the correct one (something I would have known if I'd just walked a minute further in the first place and seen the glaringly obvious signpost).



Just to show it's not all glitz and glamour, here I am entering the picturesque industrial landscapes of Hull.

Put that error down to fatigue, I suppose. That, and the fact that there's only room for a very tiny brain in my two-centimetre-wide head.

It was around 5:00 pm that I reached my hostel, in the centre of Hull. So I consider that a decent pace overall, especially when you add in my little detour. And tomorrow's walk should be a bit easier, as not only will I have an earlier start (so I can be a bit more leisurely about it all) but I'll also be able to leave most of my luggage behind in the hostel, thus lessening my burden considerably.

I rather like this hostel so far. Very homely, independent and unpretentious. But most



Crossing over the 'River Hull' into the city centre.



A jazzy mural in the hostel. It's a good job the rest of Michael isn't here, as I think he'd take issue with some of this musical notation.

importantly, it is situated almost equidistant between a Wetherspoons and a Tesco Express, one of which provided my dinner this evening and the other of which will do so tomorrow. Living the dream!

